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The Old Testament,

or the Sacred Books of the Jews.

AN ESSAY BY DR. K. KOHLER

Our civilization, although an intermingling of all streams of human culture, is chiefly due to two representative nations, the one of the Aryan, the other of the Semitic race. "Salvation," or religious inspiration to goodness, "cometh fron the Jews;" "light and sweetness "from the immortal Greeks. To be sure, the aspiration after beauty and clearness of mind was not confined to the classic soil of Hellas. Nor did the goddess of art and wisdom spring forth full-armed from the head of the Greek genius. The human mind has been found everywhere groping and struggling during untold centuries to awaken the "sleeping princess " of beauty and to solve the puzzles of the great sphinx of life, while, in fact, merely a few chosen men of Athens succeeded in detecting the master-key of art and philosophical research. Moreover, the very store of knowledge and skill possessed by the Hellenes can now be fairly traced back to Persian and Assyrian sources, or to a still older Cushitic or Chaldean tradition. Still only the Greek genius with its Midas-like magic turned the old lore into sweetness and grace. Only the azure sky of Hellas and its noble types of manhood produced poets like Homer and Sophocles, sculptors and painters like Phidias and Polygnotus, orators and historians like De-

mosthenes and Thucydides, and philosophers like Plato and Aristotle. And as every genius draws strength and inspiration from its own surroundings, we cannot but ascribe to the whole Greek people that creative power which bequeathed unto mankind its undying models of art and its true methods of philosophy. Of quite another cast of mind are those stern and lofty men of Israel, who, with thundering voices, proclaimed the kingdom of the great Yahveh throughout heaven and earth, making the human heart ring with the dictates of an awful Judge and a holy Ruler. Are we to behold in them instruments of a supernatural revelation, occupying an exempt position in the evolution of the human mind? Or are we, indeed, to believe that the Infinite and Omnipresent entered into the confines of space and time, assuming a human voice for the sake of communicating with the people of Israel at Mount Sinai? Surely truth grows with man. It is not the privilege of a certain people or race. Everywhere religion shows the same process of growth, whether we compare the popular superstitions, those survivals of fetichism, in the lower strata, or the priestly rites and doctrines prevailing among the civilized nations of antiquity, or the moral views and ideals of the great reformers of the various lands and ages. There is a spark of divine truth found beneath all pagan error, a craving after the Unseen felt amidst all idolatry. Every nation had its inspired seers and priests to lift it into serener realms of thought, of hope and of love, its sacred bards to ring forth the soul's higher emotions, and its law-givers to establish order and justice in the land by the power and authority of a divine revelation. We cannot read the sacred laws and hymns of the old Hindoos and Parsees, or the traditions and penitential psalms of the old Chaldeans brought to light by the Assyrian decipherments, without being reminded either of the Mosaic legislation, or of the inspiring force of Hebrew poetry. Still, only the Hebrew prophets and psalmists penetrated into the very heart of religion by revealing God in man and holding Him before the soul as the ever-living source and ideal of goodness, truth and righteousness, far abov-

the contest of elementary forces and brutal passions into which all heathen deities are involved. Are we to ascribe this to a gift or an instinct of the Semitic race, as the French savant Renan asserts, or to a keen, genial insight into the nature of God possessed already by Abraham, "the Hebrew ancestor," as Max Mueller tried to show? The very fact of the deep-rooted propensity to all forms of idolatry manifested by Israel, down to the time of the Babylonian exile, disproves both theories. Pure, ethical monotheism has been but gradually arrived at by long prophetical labor and struggle. Of this the sacred writings of the Hebrews themselves give sufficient record, showing how, step by step, the germ of Monotheism evolved into a lofty, world-embracing religion. This will be shown in the following pages, devoted to a historical study of the *origin, the composition and character of the Sacred Scriptures of the Hebrews* in the light of modern research.

More than any of the well-known arguments of Biblical criticism, the closing sentence of the Pentateuch reading; "And there has *no more* arisen any prophet in Israel like unto Moses" proves, that the book was not written before the end of the prophetical era. Indeed, the grand portrait of Moses' life reflects the entire work of the prophets following him. Of course, as long as the great seers of Israel and Judah were bent on elevating the notion of the God-head far above the intellectual horizon of their predecessors, they disliked to glorify Moses, whose decendants served as priests of Yahveh at the idol of Dan (see Judges xviii:30.) They scarcely alluded to his name or his work. Only when prophetical inspiration was on the decline, did the distant Sinai tower above all other mountains as the particular seat of Revelation, and Moses as the peerless prototype of all prophets and law-givers. It is the sun when setting, not while rising, that delights to reflect its brilliancy upon its starting-point.

We possess three different relations in regard to the revelation on Sinai. One tells of the ten commandments as having been given to the whole assembly and written upon two tablets

of stone which were afterwards deposited in the shrine of the covenant. The other speaks of a covenant having been concluded upon ten laws of a more priestly or liturgical character, written upon a scroll, and a still older version represents God Yahveh as personally appearing to the seventy elders and entering into a covenant with them (Compare Exodus ch. xix: ff with xxxiv and xxiv, to which allusion is made iii: 12, where the original reading was: "Ye shall *see* God on this mount.") Yet of all these the elder prophets and historians betray no knowledge whatsoever. In their eyes Mount Sinai was merely one out of many lofty seats of Yahveh, and the redemption from Egypt the actual establishment of the covenant, the fulfilment of which, on the part of God, was the conquest of Canaan.

And the contents of all the various laws ascribed to Moses also prove them to be of late origin. I not only refer to the Levitical laws about sacrifices and priestly rites, about the tabernacle the pattern of which so closely resembles the Phœnician temple built by Solomon, and the institution of the Aaronitic priesthood in the wilderness. All these, being contradicted by elder historical sources, have been ascribed by modern critics to a priestly historian of the time of the restoration. But even the older collection of laws, as well as the Ten Commandments, betray a long established settlement in Canaan, and a state of peace such as Israel hardly enjoyed before the tenth century. They prohibit those forms of idolatry which were for centuries considered as legal by priests and prophets, and allude to the Sabbath and other agricultural festivals and customs, as sanctioned by an old and general practice.

And here is another thing which offers food for reflection. Among all the ancients *the unwritten laws*, which were tacitly recognized and observed by all, were regarded as THE truly divine ones. Tradition stamped them as holy. Written laws, on the contrary, owing their origin to priestly authorities, were of more secondary weight and importance. Practice alone could sanction them. Now, it is very unlikely, that the reverse should have been the case with the Hebrews, who, down to the

latter days of the kings, are far from making the impression of being a people of literary attainments. Surely, no one will suspect the judges, or prophets like Elijah, to have been men of letters. It is by the living word that the inspired seers and singers wield their mighty influence upon the people. There is, indeed, no trace of any knowledge or practice of writing betrayed by them before the days of the kings. The first knowledge of letters the Israelites most probbaly owed to their Aramean neighbors, the skillful rivals of the Assyrians. They, rather than the Phenicians of the sea shore, (the Canaanites or "Bne' Anak") seem to have invented our letters either by deviation from the Egyptian hieroglyphics or the Chaldean cuneiforms. At any rate, the writing materials at first used by the Israelites, being not the Egyptian papyrus (or linen) scroll with ink and pen, but stone tablets with the chisel, could not encourage the composition of books or the codification of laws. Indeed, the elder collection of laws in the Pentateuch present no system, but simply a mass of decisions compiled at random. The more systematic generalizations and codifications are of a much younger date.

Neither can the often alleged kinship between the Mosaic and the Egyptian rites be maintained any longer in the face of recent inquiries. Aside from circumcision, a wide-spread African custom originating from primitive nature-worship, which shows its most cruel forms in Southern Arabia and Ethiopia, no close resemblance can be detected between them, unless such as is common to all Semitic nations. The Egyptians divided the month into three decades, but not into four weeks, with the Sabbath at the close of each, which the Hebrews derived from the Assyrians. Nor did the Egyptians worship bull-images, but living animals of all kinds, and as guardian-spirits they had not cherubs, but sphinxes. The former, like many other Hebrew customs, points to Chaldea as their native country. Hence the assertion, made first by the Alexandrians and repeated in Josephus and the New Testament, of Moses' indebtedness to the Egyptian priesthood is a fiction. Even the Bib-

lical narrative of his rescue from the water by the daughter of Pharaoh is one of those hero-legends, which re-occur the world over, having a common mythological, instead of a historical basis. Being told of the much older Assyrian king Sargon, (see G. Smith's Chaldean Genesis p. 299) it is hardly more trustworthy when given as an attempt of explaining the origin of the name of Moses. But the chief objection to the belief in the great knowledge and the high stage of religious culture attributed to Moses in the Bible, is the wide gap between him and the rude barbarity of the ages succeeding him. In vain we look in the history of the judges and kings for either a priest or a prophet to interlink the figures of Moses and Abraham with those of Isaiah and Amos, or for any one fit to transmit the literary bequest of the former to the latter ages. From the first judges to the latter kings there is everywhere betrayed a gradual rise from a state of ignorance and uncouthness to culture, rather than a degeneracy. The idea of a sublime, spiritual and holy God is seen looming up from the very midst of idolatry and fetichism. It behooves us then to disconnect the historical kernel of all the legends clustering around the sacred hills and wells, trees and altars of Canaan and the desert, in order to arrive at true facts of the patriarchal and the earlier national history.

To commence with Yahveh as the centre of Revelation, we see him represented on the Egyptian monuments under the image of a fiery serpent as the God of life, attended by two young priestesses wearing a royal crown or shining mirror like that worn by Deborah, "the woman of the flames" and the Hebrew women in the temple. (See Exod. xxxviii:8; 1 Sam. ii:22; judges iv:4.) On Mount Zalmon Yahveh was adored in the form of the brazen serpent ascribed to Moses, to whom he actually revealed himself first as a healing God like Asclepius in the sign of the serpent. (See Exod. iv, Numbers xxi, 2 Kings xviii:4.) The name Yahveh shows him to have been worshipped first as the "Impeller of the storm-clouds" and then as "Quickener of life." For this reason he was represented as riding on

Cherub-birds or desert-clouds, clad in light and fire while piercing Rahab and Leviathan, the mythical dragons, while his will was espied or performed by means of serpentine staffs, storm-mantles and belts (Ephod) or similar oraculous instruments. Thus he was already adored by the nomadic tribes dwelling on the Jordan shore called Hebrews (from the word *eber-shore*,) who, owing to him the increase of their flocks and households, kept all firstlings of animal and vegetable life, living fountains and generative organs sacred to him as the great author of all life. He became the Redeemer of the enslaved Hebrews in Egypt, and afterwards their "Strength" and warrior-god in their conquest of Canaan. Miriam, as the representative of primitive female prophecy and priesthood, played, no doubt, a much more important part in the work of the exodus and the desert wanderings than that attributed to her in our present records. The majestic Sinai, an ancient place of pilgrimage, and other desert mountains formed sacred centres of the tribal encampments. On their barren heights Yahveh was believed to dwell in unapproachable glory, while at the bubbling fountain beneath the prophet or priestess sat ascertaining his will by means of the "boring" staff to decide cases of war, of calamity or litigation (whence the name "Water of Meriba" or "Litigation" at Kadesh). From these hills Yahveh appeared unto all the poets as shining forth to aid his people in every enterprise. From there he sent forth Moses and Aaron to deliver them from Egyptian bondage. From there he turns all his wrath and destructive power, clouds laden with hail-stones, biting insects, hot-wind and pestilence against proud Egypt and Canaan; and all his blessings, clouds fraught with Manna and quails, or with rain and dew, unto his chosen ones. This was the view taken by the Hebrews of their God Yahveh, as reflected in their poetry and worship. The only marked distinction between him and any god of the other nations was the absence of any human figure, or of any division of sex. Yahveh had not grown to be the representative deity of a certain part and function of life but its very fountain-head. Hence

he remained without associate and peer. He was *the God-head*, the only god of the Hebrews. This superiority of the Hebrew worship consisted in its simplicity. But it was the simplicity of a child whose innocence is its weakness, rather than its strength. In order to have its chrysalide shape unfolded and developed into an absolute, clear-sighted and sublime monotheistic faith, it had to pass through long and severe trials and struggles. And here lies the true secret of Hebrew prophecy. By the help of his zealous servants, Yahveh had to outrival Baal and the heathen gods, until they at last dwindled into nothingness before his matchless, all-pervading, all-absorbing spiritual being. At first prophecy is rather a wild outburst of patriotism, instrumental in leading single tribes or clans to war and triumph. It is still a kind of soothsaying in connection with the priest's victory-boding ark of Yahveh, his serpentine staff, Ephod-belt and Urim we Tumim, after the manner in which Moses and Aaron performed wonders before Pharaoh. To judge from the book of Judges, the conquest of Canaan was neither the work of a single leader nor of the united people; but some valiant warrior felt roused either by inspiring oracles of prophetesses, like Deborah, or by enthusiastic impulses and visions of his own, to appear as "judgment executor of Yahveh" and to bring defeat on Israel's enemies. The tribe of Joseph, prominent already in Egypt, as is seen from the legends emblazoning the life of the patriarch—whose title Za'punt paanch Genes. xli:45, merely means "Governor of the district of Sukkoth"—took the lead. Hence Joshua, its chieftain, was celebrated as *the* conqueror par excellence. In fact, all the tales about the crossing of the Jordan, the fall of Jericho and the prolonged day of war at Gibeon, merely reflect glory upon the ark of Yahveh and the magic staff in the hand of Joshua.

No sooner, however, did the people strike roots into the soil of Canaan, than a marvelous change is noticed in their religious views. From a people of Yahveh they turn into worshippers of Baal and Astarte. This cannot be due to mere ingratitude or sensuality, since all—the priests, the rulers and the common

class—share alike in the worship. It was caused by their lacking religious or mental culture. While enjoying the blessings of agriculture in company with their Canaanite neighbors, their superiors in every art and knowledge, and partaking in their seasons and joyous festivals on the various sacred hills of the land, they felt indebted not to Yahveh, the sublime Ruler of the desert heights, but to Baal and Astarte, the deities who had ruled and fed Canaan hitherto. Of course, had they really been in possession of the promise of Yahveh to inherit the land, or of a code of laws regulating their new life therein, or had they actually committed the wholesale slaughter of the idolatrous Canaanites, as described in the later records, they could hardly have been tempted to Baal-worship by Canaanite associations. But just because all these were lacking, they staggered and went astray.

Still Yahveh would not loose hold of them. He sent his monitors in the shape of hostile invasions, which, by threatening their independence, roused their self-consciousness. He had also his spokesmen and champions. These were the *Nazarites*, genuine Bedouin saints, who, having taken a vow of abstinence from intoxicating drinks and unclean meat, and also cut a coronal sign of consecration unto Yahveh into their hair above their forehead, pledged their lives for the maintainance of the patriarchal faith and the defense of their people's freedom. Their enthusiasm was fired into heroism, as the wild Philistine hordes engulfed the land and threatened the very existence of Israel. But this Nazarite spirit, at first creating heroes of the type of Samson, the Hebrew Hercules—Nimrod, finally assumed a nobler and more spiritual character in Samuel. Around him young Nazarites rallied themselves as troups of inspired minstrels, to sound the praise of Yahveh and his wondrous deeds for Israel through the land by patriotic songs and thereby to kindle the people's patriotism. Samuel became thus the inaugurator of a new era. He united the people to repel the dreaded foes, and helped in establishing the kingdom. To his organization of prophetical schools, or assemblies, on the various sacred hills of the land is due the

rise of a *national poetry*, epic songs, like that of Deborah, and inspiring hymns, whose penetrating power struck the patriotic heart of sturdy Saul and elicited enchanting strains from the harp of David. In all these songs Yahveh appeared as the deity of a warrior nation, shining forth from the sacred, sun-lit hills of the desert to aid its people. The Hebrew faith was then still merely a religious patriotism. No offense was yet taken at investing the God-head with forms suggestive of power and dominion over nature, or in serving Yahveh in the same manner as Baal through the most cruel rites and adopted Canaanite festivals, if only the name and the worsip of the ancestral god was secured thereby. But whether the Solomonic temple with its gorgeous display of Phœnician art redounded to Yahveh's glory more than to that of the Phœnician Baal, seemed rather uncertain at first to the prophets. It is to the God on Mount Sinai that Elijah looks for inspiration and help in his fierce contest against the Baal-worship of Ahab. Jerusalem and the house of David he ignores, while the worship of Yahveh, under the image of a bull, is tolerated by Elisha, his pupil, the counselor of Jehu and his house.

Let us not pass too severe a judgment on all these prophets of the heroic age of biblical history. They are not men of literary attainments, but of noble energy, of a grand idea for which they live and are ever ready to die. They incorporate a truth, although undeveloped as yet, and impress us with awe and reverence, notwithstanding their bloody work, their narrow views and their dread-inspiring manners. Irresistible as the torrent that cuts its path through the rock, or the tempest sweeping over vast prairies, their zeal and earnestness is yet healthy and fresh as the mountain-air. Hebrew folk-lore was right when ascribing to Elijah, Yahveh's zealous champion, the God's own storm-mantle wherewith suddenly to appear and todisappear, and His heavenly fire-chariot.

But in order to be fit for a spiritual combat with heathenism, prophecy had to be imbued with literary culture. War and friendly associations with Aramea and Syria must enlarge Israel's horizon. Bright prospects and elating victories

must reflect credit upon the people's past. The glorious reign of the second Jeroboam gave rise to a *national literature*. Prophecy, having become the indispensable guide and safe-guard of the people and their king, rose to the highest pitch of ecstasy in anticipating Israel's triumph over the nations. "The Mighty One who led his people with the horns of a buffalo out of Egypt," says one of the prophets in the song ascribed to Balaam, will crush all their enemies from Amalek to Assyria before them. About this time most probably also appeared the collection of national songs often mentioned in the Bible as the Book of Iashor, "the singer," not of "the righteous" as generally interpreted. (see Joshua x:13.) A composition of the history of Israel was then also undertaken, founded chiefly on popular traditions interweaving the lives of the patriarchs and of the first leaders with all the sacred spots, the trees, pillars and altars, and all the adopted habits and festival days of eldest Canaanite antiquity. Baal-worship was thus spiritually absorbed and superseded by Yahvism; the land Canaan itself told of Israel's glorious past. Abraham and Jacob, the Hebrew ancestors, presented two types of Israelitish life, the latter that of transjordonic shepherd-life with its trickeries and plays, the former that of a virtuous chieftain and noble warrior blessed by God, honored and emulated by all men.

But prophecy should not rest there. When the men with "their hairen mantle" abused their holy vocation by greed after money, like Gehazi, or by conservative indulgence in the abominable rites of the priesthood, and by indifference to the rule of justice, a new set of men stepped forth in the name of Yahveh to hurl their fulminant thunderbolts against vice and superstition and to give utterance to the best and holiest sentiments moving the human heart. Undaunted by threatenings and sufferings, they followed their divine calling of preaching a religion of the heart instead of mere priestly worship, of true, inward holiness instead of imposed sacred practices. Deeply wounded by the sight of proud wealth and tyranny with their insatiable lust and avarice, and of idolatry with its horrible rites, they did not shrink from announcing to the Northern Kingdom,

with its hitherto revered temples and priests, its final doom, building their hopes upon the dynasty of David and its grand temple at Jerusalem. There we see them ascend the lofty watch-tower of Zion amidst disappointment and despair to herald the coming day of Yahveh, fraught not with national triumphs and political glory, but with glowing wrath and doom, with storm of destruction and devastation to avenge the wrongs and sins, the idolatry and cruelty practiced by the people and their rulers. All the old mythical attributes of Yahveh are thus turned into moral ones; his unapproachable, awful nature, suggestive of storm and fire, is sublimated into the idea of holiness. Likewise his relations to Israel were deepened and spiritualized into bonds of conjugal or paternal love. For, though repudiated like a faithless wife and an ungrateful son, Israel is expected to be reunited with Yahveh, who will have his benign sceptre of justice and peace forever swayed by the house of David to draw all nations towards Zion, thenceforth his holy mountain, in order to be adored by all in truth and righteousness.

When this culminating-point of prophecy was reached, proud Ephraim was swept away by Assyria, and of Judah only a small remnant was left. Yet this proved to be the spiritual triumph of Israel's cause. All efforts at re-establishing idolatrous conservatism failed, as soon as King Hezekiah was won to Isaiah's advanced views. Finally the priestly house of Zaddok allied itself with the school of Isaiah, and afterwards of Jeremiah, to reform the entire religious life and practice of the people, and finally, to the great surprise of King Josiah, to offer a systematic code of laws as a guide and rule. In the name of Moses, the first law-giver, these laws, preserved in Deuteronomy, attempted to revolutionize the national life, to render it subservient to the highest aims and purposes of the prophetic spirit through cultivating common instruction, the practice of charity and mercy towards the needy and the oppressed, and giving seasons of rest to the land and of redemption to the debtors.

Alas, the grand scheme failed. Only from the ruins of the Judean state and temple truth rose to triumph. But triumph it did at last, although many of the great seers of Judah would not believe in the overthrow of Yahveh's holy seat on Zion, in spite of Michah's prophecy to that effect. For might not a return to Yahveh in repentance alter his predicted doom of a nation or a city, as in the case of the prophecy of Jonah? This was the question *then* suggested by the author of the original

little book. Still Jeremiah was right, and his words of comfort and admonition served as a guiding star to those wandering into exile.

Amidst longing after, and mourning over, the lost land and liberty, the Jewish people realized the priceless boon of consolation and inspiration left by the great seers of Judah, and then the work of the *composition of the sacred national library* began. The words and written legacies of the prophets were read to devout assemblies. Levites and other singers among "the pious" and "humble ones," rung forth touching songs and prayers full of devotion and elevation, partly using, and improving upon, the old psalms and hymns composed in honor of the kings and the temple. Some of the priests and prophetical writers drew up new systems of legislation for the expected restoration of the state and temple, improving upon the old priestly statutes and habits ascribed to Moses as the first law-giver. It was a great literary harvest. But the very best fruit of the Hebrew vineyard ripened in the mind of the great unknown author of the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah, who, with the very wings of that great eagle among the prophets, soared up into still loftier realms of vision to behold the day, when Israel's temple shall be opened as a house of prayer and enlightenment to all the nations, granting even to heathens a place among the chosen priests of Yahveh. Yet the fountain of living waters slackened; the fire of inspiration died out amid a people most thirsty after the word of God. Only song still burst forth in freshness from perennial springs to quicken the heart of the exile and to bring the message of a divine mercy home to each soul. Instead of the living word of the prophets, their written bequest was listened to with awe and veneration. Instead of the inspired speaker, these stereotyped outpourings electrified the hearers. Thus books of Revelation were presented to the people. Still they were not idolized, but freely and judiciously compiled, at many places altered, interpolated and remodeled to suit the purpose of instruction and elevation. Long sentences containing assurances of comfort and reassuration were added to almost all the prophetic writings, particularly at the close of the book or chapter, and offensive expressions were expunged. With the same purpose of impressing on the people the grandeur of its mission yet to be realized by the restoration, the history from creation down to the exile was re-written, presenting a grand tableau of God working for the people consecrated to His service at the foot of the flaming Sinai. The contact with the renowned Chaldean literature

and tradition stimulated the Jewish sages to gather also their priceless treasury of song, and to trace their history back to the world's beginning *after the pattern of the Chaldean Genesis*, as did also the Hindoo and Parsee priests. In all the historical books, we easily discern the work and style of various writers; also sources representing different views; and, no doubt, the first ten chapters of Genesis bear the imprint of late Babylonian notions. So the various systems of political and priestly laws, now interwoven and connected with documents and traditions of different ages, were compiled shortly before the time of Ezra, the scribe, and cast into the shape of the so-called *five books of Moses*, which under the name of the book of *the Law*, were made the foundation of the restored temple and state. As this was mainly the work of the ruling *Sadducean* priesthood, they attributed to it the highest value and sacredness, putting it under their exclusive control as its guardians, expounders and executors, not refraining from altering now and then either the letter or their own practice, according to their judgment. The prophetical writings, however, were entrusted to the guardianship of the *Asideans*, or "pious ones," the forerunners of the *Essenes*, who used them at their congregational worship in the Synagogue with the view of offering comfort and edification to the people by dwelling on *the promises of the Messianic time*, for the fulfilment of which they longed and prayed. The general introduction of synagogues sanctioned this practice, which also invested this part of the national Hebrew library with the character of sacredness, yet only as secondary to the Law.

A third degree of holiness was finally ascribed to the collection of *Songs*, the foremost part of which formed the Psalms. Although containing many secular hymns of mere individual interest, and war-oracles of ancient times, they became the world's treasury of devotion and inspiration, partly used by, partly composed for, the Levitical choir of the temple and the synagogue service of the Asideans. These were followed by elegies, the lamentations composed during the exile, dramatic songs like the Hymenean Song of Solomon, and the Ruth-idyl. Also, sayings which fell from the lips of the wise and were crystallized into proverbs, with different additions of instructions, betraying their Babylonian origin by their celebrating "Wisdom" as the generative principle of the world, and songs, obtained a place in the national library. As a proof of higher artistic skill, the book of Job, the Hebrew Prometheus or Faust, with his bold scepticism, a keen at-

tempt at unfathoming the mysteries of life, written as the storm of destruction passed over Northern Israel, with some new parts added to it in the exile, was also happily preserved. This third class of writings being treated as a mere national good, many new books were inserted into the collection at a very late date, as the book of Chronicle, a Sadducean attempt at remodeling the ancient royal history, the Ecclesiastes, a philosophical essay betraying acquaintance with Greek Epicurism and Stoicism, and the apoclyptical book of Daniel, written in the time of the Maccabean war. The romance of Esther, giving a curious piece of history to explain an imported Persian festival, met even the disapproval of a considerable number of men in the Jewish Synagogue, when placed in the sacred canon. Still differences about the sacredness of some of the canonical books existed for a long time. The Greek and the Hebrew alphabets,—the one counting twenty-four, the other twenty-two letters,—were somewhat determinative in at last fixing the number,

Regarding *the character of the entire Hebrew Bible*, the notion of its having been idolized by the Jewish people is unfounded. It was never called by them, nor considered as, THE book of Revelation. It was not treated as the only shrine enclosing the truth for mankind. It was fairly expanded, improved and criticised, before it run into the two channels to become an iron fetter of ritualism by the Law for the Jews, and of dogmatism by the Messianic promise for the Christians. Surely it was inspiration fastened at its very wings to the letter—a rushing stream of living waters arrested and confined to a few rotten vessels. But only in this way could its truths be scattered over the wide world to dispel heathenism with its vices and superstitions, its infanticide, incest and slavery, and its gloom in regard to a world above and in regard to an ideal for mankind's future. The Hebrew Bible—and for the first two centuries Christianity had no other bible than this—gave the world a God dwelling in man, a religion leading to holiness, a great hope and a lofty ideal. Whether the Old Testament, (called thus in misapplication of Jeremiah xxxi:31, which merely desires the old covenant to be engraved upon the human heart instead of being established by bloody sacrifices,) is really and totally superseded by the New, is not the question for me here to decide. I believe, not, since I regard the Jewish ideals of justice and holiness, deep national roots and sacred family ties as stronger foundations of human society than sentimental love, as typified in the noble-souled Nazarene preacher. But, in

fact, the Hebrew Bible—its only one God as the fountain-head of all moral and spiritual perfection, its idea of man as child and image of God, its Sabbath, its ten words, its laws of public charity and its morals—built our entire social life. We can as well drive the sun out of our planet as divest our civilization of its influences.

In order to appreciate its value, we must compare the Almighty of Abraham, the Holy One of Isaiah, the merciful Father of the Psalms with the passionate gods of Homer, with the shapeless deities of Hindoo song and with the terror-stricken Parsee god, Ormuzd. Or we must contrast an Elisha or Job with Hercules and a Brahmine saint, or the laws of Manu with those of Moses, and the cosmogony of Hesiod and its Chaldean model with the sublime poetry of Genesis. Of course, we must not look for a complete system of the highest ethics and metaphysics in the Bible. Yet, from the moment it, in its Hellenic garb of beauty, made its triumphant entrance into the pagan world, it furnished the basis and crowning ideal for all moral progress of humanity. By the views of man's and woman's dignity offered on its first pages, it at least helped in abolishing slavery, polygamy and the *lextalionis* its legislation had once sanctioned. By the public instruction and elevation it fostered in the Synagogue, it spiritualized religion to render it a sweet treasure of the heart, in spite of the importance attached to the temple and the priestly sacrifice. It produced those ethics of which the Sermon on the Mount and similar Rabbinical teachings in the Talmud and Midrash are illustrious exponents. It established a monotheism so sublime and pure as to challenge Greek philosophy to reflect new credit on it notwithstanding the anthropomorphisms and anthropopathisms still expressed in it. To return to our comparison with the Greek genius; while we will ever behold in its productions the ideal of harmony and perfection in the finite world, the Hebrew, aspiring to the Infinite, struck the key-note of the heart and detected the very life-blood of humanity.

When the old covenant was concluded by God with Israel, says the Midrash in commenting upon the above-mentioned verse in Jeremiah, men were needed as mediators; hence religion had to conform to the wants of man, manifested in changeable forms and perishable letters. The religion of the future will be a covenant made without any mediating man, book or church, the divine law being engraved upon each heart to render it a sanctuary of God. Then, and not until then, the old covenant will be entirely antiquated and supplanted by the new.

DEVOTIONAL READINGS.

IV.

JUSTICE.

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Thot shalt not covet anything which is thy neighbor's.

Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he be one of thy own brethren or of the strangers that are in the land. In his day shalt thou give him his hire, before the sun shall have gone down upon him; because he is poor and setteth his heart upon it.

Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child.

Thou shalt not injure a stranger nor oppress him.

Thou shalt not incline towards the great so as to pervert judgment; nor shalt thou be partial to a poor man in his cause.

Thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor.

Ye shall do no injustice in judgment, in meting, in weight or in measure; just balances, just weights, a just ephah and a just hin shall ye have.

Ye shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie one to another.

When thou meetest the ox or the ass of thy enemy going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him.

Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart; thou shalt not avenge nor bear any malice against the children of thy people; but thou shalt love thy neigbor as thy self.—*Hebrew Laws.*

Stand fast to justice when ye bear witness before God, though it be against yourselves or your parents or your kindred, whether the party be rich or poor. God is nearer to you than both; therefore follow not passion lest ye swerve from the truth. Stand up as witnesses for God by righteousness, and let not ill-will to any induce you to act unjustly. Act uprightly; this will approach nearest unto piety.—*Koran.*

Hear this, ye that pant to oppress the needy.
And to destroy the poor of the land;
That say 'When will the new moon be gone, that
we may sell corn,
And the Sabbath that we may set forth wheat,
Making the ephah small and the shekel heavy,

And falsifying the balances with deceit,
That we may buy the poor for silver,
And sell the refuse of the wheat?'
Surely I will never forget any of your deeds!
Shall not the land tremble for this?
I will turn your feasts into mourning,
And all your songs into lamentations!
I hate, I despise your feasts;
I have no delight in your solemn assemblies;
Your burnt offerings I will not accept,
And upon your thank offerings I will not look.
Take away from me the noise of your songs,
And the music of your harps, let me not hear!
Let *justice* flow forth as water,
And righteousness as a mighty stream.—*Amos.*

Let him who is departing from justice consider within himself, I shall perish. Forsake on the moment any advantage gained without equity. The true merchandise of merchants is to guard and do by the things of others as they do by their own. The great will not regard as poverty the low estate of that man who abides with equity. *Cural I.* (*Hindoo*).

At the beginning of the world God instituted this just retribution—measure for measure; and if all the laws of nature should be reversed, this law would stand forever.—*Talmud.*

Justice is so dear to the Eternal that if at the last day an atom of injustice were to remain on earth, the universe would shrivel like a snake skin to cast it out forever.—*Persian.*

The property which is acquired by fraud will perish in the ratio of its seeming increase. Even their body will fail the fraudulent; but even the world of the Gods will not fail the just.—*Cural II.* (*Hindoo*)

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old times, thou shalt not kill, and whoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judges. But I say unto you that whoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judges. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go away. First be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift.—*Jesus.*

Our Country's prayers shall be,
Our father's God, to Thee!
On Thee we wait!
Be her walls Holiness;
Her rulers Righteousness;
Her officers be Peace;
God save the State!

Lord of all truth and right,
In whom alone is might,
On Thee we call!
Give us prosperity,
Give us true liberty;
May all the oppressed go free;
God save us all!—*Anonymous.*

Series I. **Corner-Stones of Character.** No. 9

BY MRS. K. G. WELLS.

JUSTICE.

"The just man walketh in his integrity."

A child's name for justice is **fairness.** The play-ground's cry is "that's no fair," or "play fair." How can children then be fair or just?

Firstly, by **actions,** by giving to each one his due, whether it is money, pencils, paper, books, toys, or bats and balls. Return a sharpened pencil, sharpened; a book undog-eared and toys unbroken. Business people even pay for what is lent to them. In dividing candy or chestnuts give fair measure, and in "swapping" anything, be sure that the other boy or girl receives the full value of what he "swaps." Earn the money for Christmas gifts. Don't ask mamma to give you money, for you to give right away as presents. Let other boys and girls have a fair chance to do their best without your hindering them, if only by your cool manner.

Secondly, by **thoughts.** In judging other people, put yourself in their place and try to understand them before judging them. Try to see things and persons just as they are; then feel sorry for others' failures, before you say what you think, or before your thinking is hardened into an unchangeable, unkind opinion. Understand people's motives, which are often better than the awkward result of motives.—actions. Let "mercy season justice." (Tell the story of the Merchant of Venice.) Too much enthusiasm or too little sympathy leads to false estimates of others. Being just alone makes you respected, but not always beloved. (Aristides the Just.) Clear judgment of men and things is insight, and insight makes one a leader and keeps one from doing wrong. Children form hasty judgments, declaring they never will speak to each other again. Where is their justice?

Civil society depends for its existence upon the administration of justice; crime must be prevented and others' rights respected; so also must a **home** and **friendship** be regulated on principles of justice. Justice rejects undue praise, and is not too proud to exclaim against undue blame. Children should be frank with parents and teachers.

Be **"square"** in all your dealings even with yourself.

Justice lead to **bravery,** defence of the weak, and to chivalry in speech, act and thought; it makes the patriot, and the defender of noble causes, and the vindicator of others' claims.

Let the children recall the emblem of justice (the scales), its synonyms,—right, lawfulness, etc.,—and give daily illustrations of it.

Towards **God** justice is shown by not allowing childish anger or troubles to lesson belief in His eternal fairness; towards **others** by not imputing false motives to them, by not being prejudiced against them, and by not withholding that which belongs to each one; towards **ourselves** by being neither conceited nor depressed, and by doing for ourselves the best we can without interfering with others rights and pleasures.

Series I. **Corner-Stones of Character.** No. 10.

BY MRS. K. G. WELLS.

USEFULNESS.

"Usefulness is the parent of happiness."

Usefulness is the **test** or **measure** of one's **value.**

Usefulness in **doing** consists largely in doing things for other people in their way, not in ours. Children often like to help in their way only, and don't want to do an errand right off, or to mind the baby on a play afternoon, or to amuse a tiresome little visitor when they have their own "cronies." Just so long as it is fun, they like to help; but when the useful thing has to be often done, or something else given up for it, then they make excuses. Yet little girls have taken care of sick mothers, and little boys have supported their families by selling newspapers or by boot-blacking. (Let the children give such instances as they know.) Girls and boys need not be poor in order to help; they can still look after the smaller children; watch their parents' faces to see what they need but do not mention; hand others the hot toast; brush the hearth; light the lamps; have papa's slippers and mamma's shawl ready.

Usefulness in **being** comes from the effect of character. If the corner-stones have been well laid, the influence that comes from such building helps. If a child is too sick or crippled to do anything and yet is patient, truthful, etc., he helps by showing that goodness need not depend on health. A gentle child makes a home peaceful.

Usefulness in the **home** lies in doing all you can to make it bright and comfortable, by watching for little ways in which to serve parents and grandparents, brothers and sisters, servants and visitors:—in the **school,** in obedience and attention to teachers:—and in the **world,** in doing everything for everybody.

Let the children count **how many times** in the day they can be useful **without much effort;** then how many times **with** effort. Let them think of suitable proverbs and rhymes.

Only a few people can do great useful things, but all can do countless **little** things. Never despise an opportunity because it is slight or shirk it from fear of seeming "goody." Don't be ashamed to pick up and return the fallen apples and sticks which some poor body has dropped, or to carry bundles, and to be friendly to queer-looking people.

Usefulness like justice **leads** to **chivalry,** which makes one labor for others' sakes. It is grand to be useful, every one can be, even if neither brilliant nor handsome. It is the one thing always left to be done, when a child cannot succeed in plays or studies as he wishes; all it needs is attention to and sympathy for others' wants. Then as one grows older, usefulness will be marked by tact and grace.

If even **God** needs our help, how much more must **other people,** and as our usefulness can aid both them and Him, we should do our utmost to develop our power of aiding for **our own** sakes.

Notes and News.

Rev. Ira C. Billman pastor of the "Orthodox" Congregational Church of Adrian, Mich., attended the Unitarian State Conference at Charlotte, and joined heartily in the exercises—reading an essay, speaking, conducting devotional exercises, etc.

Rev. C. R. Weld preached at the Convention in Philadelphia, on "The Logic of the Vicarious Atonement as applied to the Common Affairs of Life." A suggestive theme! Might it not be well for readers of Unity who have friends among the Orthodox clergy to request them to preach sometime when convenient on this subject?

In a Sabbath School Convention held at Worthington, Pa., by the United Presbyterians, the question was gravely discussed: "Will a true Christian use the word *Sunday* school?" These good people are so sure they are right in saying *Sabbath* instead of Sunday that they cannot understond how anybody can be truly good who does not do exactly as they do. They regard the use of the word Sunday as a heathenish piece of business. Here is 19th century religious progress for us!

At Berrien Springs, Mich., the Liberals have organized a unique religious society called "The Brotherhood of Humanity." Its *Object* is, "to promote Unity, Charity, Friendship, Kindness, Honesty, Truth and Justice." Its *Principles*:

> "Believing what is known, to no creed confined,—
> Our Brethren are the true of all human kind.
> Love truth, do good, be just and kind to all,
> Exalt the right, though every ism fall."

Its Golden Rules of Life: "Keep an even mind. As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them. Let every thought, word, and act promote the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. Contented with the past; thankful for the present; hopeful for the future. Love for Father God and Brother Man. Adoring the good the Beautiful and the True." Its *Pledge:* "We, the undersigned, do solemnly pledge ourselves to follow the Rules of this Brotherhood, according to the best light we have," etc. Persons joining have certificates of Membership presented to them.

The Chicago "*Alliance*," Prof. Swing's old paper, (lately risen up out of its moribund state,) has been making things lively for the City Churches. Sept. 15 it sent round reporters to a number of the leading churches, and in the following issue appeared a table of the churches with "seating capacity" and "attendance." Except the Catholic Ca-

thedral with an attendance of 1820 against 2000 seats, Mr. SWING's Theatre Service with 1650 against 1800, and Dr. THOMAS's with 710 and 1100 (evening) against 1250, it was a poor showing; many of the churches, including "Unity" (ROBERT COLLYER being absent) and the "Church of the Messiah" having only from 12 to 40 per ct. of their accomodations occupied. It has been seriously impugned, however, and we imagine not without reason, proving by the one fact actually known to us that the Church of the Messiah is credited with a seating capacity of 1200, when it is really seated for rather less than 800. Still, there is no doubt that the Church attendance in Chicago is lamentably low, even including the evening congregations, which are almost universally very distinct from those in the morning.

We are very glad to be able to announce that Rev. F. L. HOSMER's Sunday School service book, "The Way of Life," has been reduced in price by the publishers—G. P. PUTNAM's SONS, 182 Fifth Ave., New York. It can now be obtained for 50 cts. cloth, and 40 cts. paper, with a still further discount of 33⅓ per cent to schools ordering it in quantities direct from the publishers. This puts it within reach of many of our schools which wanted it but felt before that they could not afford it. We regard it as almost beyond comparison the best Sunday School Service Book that has ever been prepared in this country. We desire also to call attention to its excellent fitness for Congregational use in connection with the regular worship of the church. Indeed we are disposed to think it nearly or quite as well adapted for use in the church as in the Sunday School. Why should not many of our societies adopt it for both? We know of one society at least which is purposing to do this; and we venture to predict that many of our societies, when once their attention has been called to its admirable adaptation for both, will follow suit.

ASA K. BUTTS, 19 Dey St., N. Y. has begun the publication of a new weekly journal of "Progress and Reform" called *Man*. It is designed to meet the want of the same class of readers as the Evolution, only it is to be more varied and popular in its contents, a good deal cheaper, and weekly instead of monthly. Indeed, it is to be a marvel of cheapness, its cost being only $1.00 per year, including an eight page supplement, or 50 cts. per year, without the supplement, in clubs of four copies. The first number of the new journal, which is at hand, gives evidence of brightness and vigor. There is no mistaking its "liberality" if liberality means opposition to most of the social, economic, political, philosophic and religious "orthodoxies." It gives evidence of being in sympathy with the National or Greenback-Labor party in politics, and that there may be no mistake about its atheism and materialism it adopts as its motto these lines from the "poet and prophet" SWINBURNE:

"The soul that is substance of nations,
Reincarnate with fresh generations;
The great god MAN, which is God."

The first number contains a letter from Rev. GEO. W. COOKE, which so well indicates what seem to us both the strong and the weak points of the paper, that we quote briefly. Writes Mr. COOKE:

"I hope your new paper will succeed. But I am not a Greenbacker or a Communist. I think the people of this country never were deluded into anything more foolish than the present insane cry for paper money. It means National destruction, if the National party succeeds. Yet my sympathies are all with the working people, and with all *true reform*. You have made the *Evolution* a fine journal. I haved liked it, though your materialistic and Greenback ideas do not meet with my sympathies. So in regard to the new paper; I wish it success, not because I shall agree with all its plans, but because of its freedom, its ability, its cleanliness, (I infer these points from the *Evolution*.) I would like to contribute some hard money articles, as well as some on other subjects, from what I regard as the evolutionary basis of reform. I am too much of an Evolutionist to believe in fiat creations, fiat money, fiat social reforms, or fiat salvation." (J. T. S.)

The American Unitarian Association are holding negotiations with Rev. J. L. DOUTHIT, of Shelbyville, with a view to securing him as State missionary for Illinois.——The Central Presbyterian Church of St. Louis has offered to sell its handsome edifice which cost $90,000, to the Unitarians. Negotiations are pending.——Rev. JOHN SNYDER, pastor of the First Unitarian Church of St. Louis, has begun Sunday afternoon services, to accommodate ladies who cannot come to church in the evening. Mr. SNYDER writes us: "We had a splendid Conference at Princeton, (Ills.). BLAKE, GORDON, and the others had fine papers. I think Western work never looked so hopeful. Let us enlarge UNITY next year into a full fledged paper, with Robert Collyer at the head of it."——Rev. GEO. W. COOKE preached his first sermon at Indianapolis, Oct. 27, on "Reasons for supporting a Broad, Free, Rational Church."——Rev. J. N. PARDEE has engaged to preach half the time for the newly formed Unitarian Society at Charlotte, Mich. and the other half at Lapeer, in the same State. The outlook in each place seems to be full of promise.——The Keokuk, Iowa, Society has engaged the services of Rev. JOHN ANDREW, of Ware, Mass., for three months, with a view to his permanent settlement.——The Fourth Unitarian Church, Chicago, has engaged Rev. JAMES KAY APPLEBEE for three months. His congregations there are large. He has also preached several Sundays for the Third Church. His experiment of Sunday Evening Lectures at Hooley's Theatre is very successful, and he has made arrangements to continue them for six months.——Rev. W. R. ALGER, who has been for a number of years at the Church of

the Messiah, New York, has accepted a call to Denver, Col., where he has already entered upon his work.——Rev. JOHN W. CHADWICK begins his 1878-9 series of printed sermons with a grand one on the "Faith of the Doubters."——A friend sends us the following correction of an error which occurred in a recent number of UNITY: "The writer of the item concerning THOS. WORCESTER, D. D., who has recently died in Boston, has slipped a little in speaking of *Noah Worcester* as the lexicographer. The lexicographer was *Joseph E. Worcester*, but whether he were a son, or a cousin's son of Noah, the Unitarian minister, I cnnnot make out. The sixteenth volume of the American Encyclopedia, and Sprague's Annals of the American Unitarian pulpit, are the only books I have to consult. The same man, probably, was the grandfather of *Noah* and the *great*-grandfather of *Joseph E.*——Four important Conferences have just been held with most significant results—at Princeton, Ills., at LaPorte, Ind., at Madison, Wis., and at Philadelphia, Pa. The four will be reported in our next.——"A Service of Joy" for Christmas, containing the words and music of two fresh and bright carols, is just published by the Western Unitarian S. S. Soc'y, and are for sale at $2.00 per 100. Send orders to Miss F. L. ROBERTS, 75 Madison St.——The new Unity S. S. Service Book, by Mr. BLAKE, is passing through the press and will be ready Dec. 1st.——On Sunday, Nov. 3d, Rev. BROOKE HERFORD'S church in this city, grappled with its debt of $20,000, and raised on the spot $17,000. The remaining $3,000 were raised during the following week. As a consequence, there is great joy in the Church of the Messiah.

UNITY, (formerly THE PAMPHLET MISSION) has been established for the purpose of publishing a semi-monthly series of Liberal Religious pamphlets on the Unity. the Evolution, the Doctrines, the Bibles, and the Leaders of Religion; on the Relations of Religion to Science, to Devotion and Conduct, and on kindred topics; written by men whose word combines Liberal thought with religious feeling. Each pamphlet will contain an Essay or Sermon, (original or reprint,) together with from six to ten pages of "Notes and News," made up of short editorials, gleanings from the freshest religious thought, and news-items about Liberal work, Liberal books, etc. It is hoped that the publication will meet the want not only of persons already connected with Liberal organizations, but also, especially, of ISOLATED LIBERALS—the fives and tens and twenties in small towns. Besides its use in the home, it can do service among friends and neighbors, as well as furnish regular material for Sunday meetings and discussions in places hardly to be reached by Liberal preachers.

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